

next generation of workers, that we are going to ensure the success of our country, and without a well-trained workforce, we could see employers moving the best jobs to other countries where workers have the skills necessary to perform that work. So we can't allow this to happen.

We have the building blocks necessary for the best education system in the world, but when we compare American students to other students, there is no question that there is room for improvement. Just ask the employers in our districts or area colleges and universities where employers are finding it more difficult to find skilled workers and where college students are having to take remedial classes when they go in as freshmen because they are not at the point where they can really do the first level of college education.

I think that certainly Congress has recognized the importance of addressing this issue. In 2001, along came No Child Left Behind. Our intention was to address the achievement gap that exists in our country between the disadvantaged children and their more affluent peers by holding the States and schools accountable for the education of all students. This law also gives parents and taxpayers information on the education that their children receive compared to other schools. So I believe that this goal continues to be supported in Congress and in the schools and communities across the country.

Now, 7 years after the passage of No Child Left Behind, I think we are now reflecting on where things are working and how we can improve the law.

I know, Mr. Chairman, you have spent so much time on this issue, and we have had numerous, numerous hearings in the last few years and this session of Congress, but also in the 109th and the 108th, and always working, and even before that since 2001, to make sure how we can improve the law. But I had thought that we would be reauthorizing this system last year, and, unfortunately, it has been held up. But it has given us time.

I remember we had one hearing with 46 people that came in to testify. It was kind of the last hearing before we thought we were going to get this bill out. I think I sat through the whole thing. But also I have and a lot of the other Members have held roundtables in our districts to talk to superintendents, to talk to teachers, to talk to parents, to talk to businesses, to talk to Chambers of Commerce, to talk to students as well, and the community, because that is what it takes to make our schools the best that we can have.

So I think that this discussion tonight will demonstrate the need to reauthorize No Child Left Behind sooner rather than later. I guarantee that our international competitors are not waiting for the U.S. to catch up. I think that we need to really proceed, really with the hope that everyone will realize that education is the basis of every-

thing that evolves for our children and our grandchildren to be a success and have a very successful life and really contribute to our country in moving ahead.

I would like to thank you for hosting this discussion tonight. With that, I will yield back so some of our other Members have an opportunity.

Mr. McKEON. Thank you very much. I really learned from your remarks. I knew you were an attorney, but I didn't know how the rest of your family had been benefited from education. It is good to learn about each other, and, again, as you said, the importance of education, to get on the ladder to climb to achieve the American dream. We here tonight, all of us, want to see that every child in America has the full opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Now let's hear from Mr. DAVIS, the gentleman from Tennessee. I am glad to have you with us.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Thank you, Mr. McKEON. Thank you for your leadership in the committee.

No Child Left Behind was signed into law before I was elected to Congress. It was signed into law in 2002 with the intent of increasing the overall achievement of students in elementary and secondary schools.

As written, the law requires the following: Annual assessments in math and reading in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school; reports on overall achievement and progress made by different groups of students; school accountability; high quality teachers in every classroom; increased parent information and choice; and State achievement standards and testing.

This law has far-reaching implications. I wanted to hear from the people both directly and indirectly involved with No Child Left Behind, also known as NCLB, so last year I held a roundtable discussion on NCLB in my district. Participants included parents, teachers, school superintendents, school board members, members of the business community and Chamber of Commerce, and representatives from the House Education and Labor Committee and the State and Federal departments of education. Most people agreed that No Child Left Behind is working, but reforms are necessary.

As I came to Washington, I found Washington is the only place where when something is supposed to expire, it doesn't expire. It just continues to move on. No Child Left Behind should have been reauthorized last year. It has not come up for reauthorization yet, and I think that should happen.

Many important issues were raised during my town hall meetings. A few of the main concerns were schools and school districts making adequate yearly progress, or AYP; meeting the teacher qualifications as set forth by No Child Left Behind; and the impact that special education students and Limited English Proficient students are having on local schools and school districts.

There are a lot of people with a lot of common sense back in the mountains of East Tennessee. Most teachers in my district believe they should be held accountable. That is just common sense. But it is like a three-legged stool. You can't only hold a teacher accountable and expect to get good results. It is like a three-legged stool. Teachers need to be held accountable, but also you need moms and dads to be involved in the education of their students, and also you need the students to become involved and work hard to make a difference. It really doesn't matter how good the teacher is. If you don't have moms and dads and the student involved, you will still get poor results. Teachers need to teach, not parent.

Ideally you will have a good teacher, you will have parents that are involved, and a student who is willing to work hard. While this isn't always the case, we must do everything we can in our power to see that it is there for most children. We need to continue to move every child forward, and bring those in the lower end of the percentile forward, but without holding those at the higher end back.

Students must be challenged and encouraged to learn. Students should not be counted in several subgroups. For instance, one child may be in both the English as a second language and children with special needs categories. Every student should be moving forward, but not every child can get to the same point. Most students can get from point A to point Z, but there are some students, special needs students come to mind, that may only go from A to B to C. They all should be moving forward, but you have to use some common sense when you pass legislation.

Also the way graduation rates are calculated need to be reviewed. People who decide to make the effort to go back to school and get their GED should be included in the graduation rates.

Let me give you an example. I have a school in my district in Hawkins County, Tennessee, that only had eight graduating students, eight students in their 12th grade. Four of those students received college scholarships. Doesn't that sound amazing? You have 50 percent of your students receiving college scholarships. However, one student dropped out, so now you have seven students and four students out of seven receiving college scholarships. So fully half of that class received scholarships. But one student didn't graduate, and because of that and the small number of students in Clinch School back in Hawkins County, Tennessee, that school is considered a failing school.

We need to reauthorize No Child Left Behind, and we need to fix some of these problems that I have mentioned tonight. Graduation rates, GED, English as a second language, those are some of the things that I hear that need to be fixed as we move forward into reauthorizing No Child Left Behind. These problems are fixable, and